

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
Meeting minutes-November 12, 2003
Wabash and Erie Canal Interpretive Museum and Conference Center
Carroll County - Delphi, Indiana

Members present:

Allen County-Ron James
Carroll County-Teresa Maxwell
Cass County-Janet Fawley
DNR-Steve Morris
Fountain County-Ron Howard
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Parke County-John Isaacs
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky) Neiburger
Vigo County-Keith Ruble
Wabash County-Ernie Passwater
Warren County-Louise Jewell

Proxies:

Adams County-Lucky Neiburger
Jay County-Lucky Neiburger
Vermillion County-Lucky Neiburger
Wells County-Lucky Neiburger

Voting members not represented:

Gibson County
Knox County
Wells County

Non-voting members present:

Steve Kennedy-DNR Division of Historic
Preservation & Archaeology

Non-voting members not present

Dept. of Commerce - Tourism
INDOT
IDEM

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation
David Duvall-DNR DHPA

Others present:

Ken Brunswick-Upper Wabash River Basin
Commission
Donn Werling-Allen County/Ft. Wayne
Historical Society
Tom Castaldi-Allen County Historian
Mercedes Brugh-Little Turtle Waterway
Joe Payne-West Lafayette Parks
Carol Stradling-Delphi
Dan McCain-Carroll Co. Wabash & Erie Canal
Rae Schnapp-Hoosier Environmental Council
Gary Doxtater-American Consulting
Dawn Kroh-Green 3, Indianapolis
Carolyn Howard
Susan Ruble
Ruth Isaacs
Paula Woods-West Lafayette, Tippecanoe
County
Judy Ryan-Lafayette, Tippecanoe Co.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lucky Neiburger called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. All attendees present introduced themselves. Lucky thanked Dan McCain for a tour of the museum and Rhonda Jones for arranging the catering services for lunch.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10TH MEETING MINUTES

Minutes were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lucky stated that a nominating committee needed to be appointed for officers for next year. Lucky, Steve Morris and Marianna Weinzapfel were asked to serve on the nominating committee. Lucky would like to hear from members of the commission about who they think would be good candidates.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Susan Benner met with Lance Schwarzkopf, Wabash Watershed Alliance, Watershed Coordinator and he gave Susan a handout about the Wabash River Watershed in Ohio. Susan handed out copies at the WRHCC meeting. The handout states that the Wabash River watershed is Ohio's most degraded watershed.

Susan attended the Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference, September 22-23, 2003, in Indianapolis. The WRHCC had a booth at the conference and Susan was able to pass out many brochures and posters. In WRHCC's electronic newsletter Susan wrote that three particular breakout sessions were extremely informative. The sessions were on developing water trails, working with the arts community and incorporating tourism and telling stories on trails. Susan would really recommend that when the next conference takes place some of the commission members attend.

Stace England kayaked down the Wabash River from Vincennes to New Harmony in September 2003. He wrote an article about his experience and that article is on the WRHCC website. Susan had limited hard copies at the meeting.

Susan was also contacted by e-mail by a gentleman who is interested in developing a canoe trip to discuss 1700's history along the Wabash between Adams and Wells Counties. Susan has contacted both the Bluffton and Adams County Park and Recreation Departments and they are both interested in the possible project.

Alcoa Foundation has been involved in a "One Million Tree Program." They now expanded that program to a "Ten Million Trees" nationwide. Some Alcoa plants are looking to partner with organizations or a single community group to provide funding for trees. For more information about the program the website is:

http://www.alcoa.com/global/en/environment/ten_million_trees.asp.

Susan volunteered at Sullivan Counties Wabash River Expedition on October 2nd and 3rd. Susan received two Certificates of Appreciation, one for herself and one for the WRHCC. The WRHCC received the certificate of appreciation in part because John Gettinger donated money to the program on WRHCC's behalf. On the t-shirts that the students and volunteers get for participating in the program, the WRHCC is listed as one of the sponsors due to John's contribution.

Susan was asked by Stacey Hans, Watershed Coordinator for the Partnership for Turtle Creek to write a letter of support for their Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Application on behalf of the WRHCC. If awarded the grant, the Partnership for Turtle Creek will educate the public about the health of Turtle Creek Watershed, implement Best Management Practices and address bank stabilization issues around the reservoir. The health of Turtle Creek Reservoir is of importance since it drains into the Wabash. Susan sent a letter of support to Stacey on September 18th.

Susan attended a meeting held by Indiana Tourism to discuss the merger of DNR's Recreation Guide, Hoosier Outdoor (RV and campground guide) and Enjoy Indiana's Travel Guide into one Indiana Outdoor Recreation publication. The idea is to provide one consumer-friendly guide that will be the official and complete resource for outdoor recreation. For more information about the project Susan will have a copy of the handouts that were provided at the meeting. Let Susan know if you would be interested in participating in this project.

Executive Director's Report (continued)

Susan attended an Upper Wabash River Basin Commission meeting in Bluffton. The UWRBC is planning on applying to IDEM for a 205(j) watershed management grant. Ken Brunswick will be speaking at the WRHCC meeting about the project and asking for the WRHCC's support in their endeavor.

Susan and Louise Jewell attended a workshop on big river systems. Louise went to the workshop when it was in St. Louis while Susan attended the workshop in Burlington, Iowa. Louise wrote about her experience in the WRHCC electronic newsletter, Wabash Reflections. Susan attended the workshop with the hope of establishing a similar program on the Wabash. Susan showed some of the pictures she had taken at the workshop to the Commission.

The Tippecanoe County Historical Museum now has a permanent exhibit on display about the Wabash River in Tippecanoe County. The commission's electronic newsletter provides a brief article about the exhibit. Susan has visited the museum and encourages anyone passing through Lafayette to stop and visit it.

Water testing on the Wabash River has begun. Water has been tested in Sullivan County and in Posey County. The test results were pretty good so far. Susan showed some pictures from the water quality testing. The data that is retrieved from the water quality testing will be inputted into the Hoosier Riverwatch database. The database can be viewed on the Hoosier Riverwatch website. The WRHCC was awarded a grant by Riverwatch to test the Wabash. Some of the tests performed include nitrogen, pH, phosphorous, temperature, and turbidity.

Susan attended an Indiana Parks and Recreation Association "Grants 101" Workshop on November 5th. It was held in Seymour. The focus of the workshop was mainly on state grant programs.

Susan has been asked by the Greater Lafayette Convention and Visitors Bureau to do a presentation on the development of the Wabash River Water Trail on December 18th. If there are any groups in your county that might like to hear about the water trail development let Susan know and she will develop a presentation for them.

When Susan met with Lance Schwarzkopf of the Wabash Watershed Alliance he had the idea of developing a Wabash River documentary. Susan has contacted WFYI, the PBS station out of Indianapolis about the possibility of developing such a documentary on the whole river. Susan spoke with Clayton Taylor, the Vice President of production and he sounds very interested in the idea. Susan has sent him some information about the commission and the video the Wabash River Parkway Commission produced about the Wabash. Susan has a meeting with the Vice President of Productions at WFYI on December 3rd. The response from WFYI has been very positive and some ideas suggested are to work with education advisors early on to turn the documentary into something that can be used in classrooms and to create a longer documentary to possibly run during the WFYI pledge drive. By working with WFYI they might be able to help us create a proposal to request funding to produce the video. An estimate on the cost of producing the video/documentary is \$35,000.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Steve Morris passed out the financial report for November 12, 2003. The report (attached) showed the available balance at this time. The report also shows the expense claims in process at this time, three months rent, Susan's postage, brochure shipping, phone bill, and Steve's postage. Ron James said the report was well done.

Lucky Neiburger said he has talked to Senator Weatherwax about the commission's proposed change to state law requirements regarding making payments for commission expenses.

John Gettinger questioned the Budget Agency mandatory reserve. Steve Morris explained that the Budget Agency, as part of the executive branch of state government, is authorized to limit spending. Steve also commented that the Budget Agency has agreed to release additional funds if the commission needs funds to match any grants it might receive. Ron James suggested the commission pursue a project that will utilize these funds. John Gettinger commented the water trail project could use these funds. It was suggested that the development of "Wabash River Heritage Community" signs could be another project to fund. Janet Fawley asked if the WRHCC has defined what a Wabash River Heritage Corridor Community was and what town or cities should be included. Steve Morris mentioned the Division of Outdoor Recreation is checking to see if any WRHCF grant projects came in under budget. If so, these funds could also be made available for corridor projects.

Water Trail Committee Report

On November 8th, Susan Benner, Chuck Weis, Bernie Dahl and John Gettinger took a trip to Libertyville, IL. They met with individuals from the IL DNR, the Openlands Project, Illinois Access Project, National Park Service, and the Graphic Designer for the Northeastern Illinois Water Trail Project. The Northeastern Illinois Water Trail Project has developed water trails on specific rivers in northeast Illinois. The water trails they have developed are canoe specific. Signs for the northeastern Illinois water trails are located on bridges over rivers, roads above rivers and at the canoe launches. Some of the water trails also have land-based trails adjacent to the water trails. The water trails in Illinois host canoe races in order to publicize their existence and build support for their development.

The State of Illinois is interested in assisting with a Wabash River water trail. Illinois will help the commission with interpretive signage at certain access sites because some of the ramps to the Wabash are located in Illinois. Keith Ruble wanted to know what the federal standards were for a canoe launch.

The commission did not get the Golden Eagle Grant they applied for to develop the water trail. Banks of the Wabash has received some grant money for the development of interpretive signs for the Wabash Water Trail. The grants require that the money be spent by summer of 2004. Bernie Dahl, President of Banks of the Wabash and Professor of Landscape Architecture at Purdue University will be using some of his students on the water trail project and they may be able to help develop a logo for the water trail.

The Sycamore Trails RC & D approve of and will help the commission with the water trails. Janet Fawley suggested the Arrowhead RC&D and the Cass County SWCD might also be supportive.

Newsletter

The first WRHCC electronic newsletter, *Wabash Reflections* was online October 28, 2003. Everyone was given a copy at the commission meeting. The next three names chosen to submit an article were: Mike Mettler, Ron James and Ken Einselen. These articles are due January 12th, 2004.

Education Committee

On November 25th, the Purdue Cooperative Extension Agents from Vermillion, Vigo, Parke and Sullivan counties invited 4-H children to help them build project outlines based on the Wabash River. The children told the agents what types of projects they would like to see developed to learn more about the Wabash River and what types of projects would be child friendly.

OLD BUSINESS**WRHCC Retreat**

Susan passed out information about the prices at the Garrison at Ft. Benjamin Harris State Park. It is expensive. The alternative is to go somewhere else. Janet Fawley is concerned with the cost not being in the budget. Tom Straw suggested Susan explore other options, including Turkey Run State Park, and report at the next meeting. Tom Straw made a motion to write a letter to Rory Robinson formally requesting that he facilitate the meeting at Turkey Run. Mike Mettler seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Corridor Management Plan

Rory Robinson was not present at the meeting. He did make final drafts available of the Corridor Management Plan for the members of the commission. Rory would like to see more graphics in the plan. Any changes/additions to this draft must be to Susan Benner no later than November 26. In early December, Susan and Rory will be making final changes to the document and then it will be posted on the web as a final piece.

501(c)(3) Status

Ron James has found that except for the current year, The Friends of the Wabash, are in good standing as incorporated in Indiana. However, Ron has found no finance reports for the first ten years or any documents showing they are a federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit. The current members of the organization do not know if they are non-profit and Ron can't find any additional information. Ron reported on average it takes 8 hours to complete a 501(c)(3) application and 50 plus hours to gather the information needed.

There was some discussion about the need for a non-profit organization to parallel the commission's efforts. Ron James reported that contributions to the commission are tax deductible. It was also mentioned that many foundations exclude government entities from applying for grants.

In order to maintain Indiana incorporation status for Friends of the Wabash, there are forms to be filled out plus a \$15 fee. There was discussion about the fee, etc. Janet Fawley did not think state funds could be used to pay for the reporting fee. Tom Straw made a motion to personally pay \$15 and file the appropriate paperwork with the state. Janet Fawley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Foundation Center's Online Subscription

Susan Benner provided examples of information about funding programs now available to the commission through the Foundation Directory. Susan offered to help counties locate financial assistance. She is currently helping Knox County try to find funding for playgrounds.

BREAK**Speakers**

Rae Schnapp, Water Policy Director with the Hoosier Environmental Council presented information about the Wabash Riverkeeper program. There are currently 114 riverkeeper programs that make up the Waterkeeper Alliance.

Speakers (continued)

Steve Kennedy, DNR Historic Preservation and Archeology gave an update on cultural/historic WRHC Fund projects. Steve explained that there were 20 proposals submitted and 11 of those proposals were funded. The current status of the 11 Historical & Cultural projects is: One project was cancelled, two are still in progress and eight of the projects are completed. Of the eight that are completed, Steve gave a brief synopsis of the work that was done to restore them.

NEW BUSINESS**Letters sent**

Susan mailed Resolution 0212 as adopted at the September meeting.

Steve Morris reported that letters seeking appointments to the commission were sent out to all 19 counties.

Letters Received

Steve Morris reported receiving notification that the 2004 Indiana Legislative Directory is available for purchase. Discussion was heard about ordering any legislative directories for this year. Ron James made a motion not to get any Legislative Directories this year. Janet Fawley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Susan Benner reported having received a flyer to purchase the Conservation Directory 2004; GeoNews, a newsletter from the Indiana Geological Survey; Footprints at the Forks, a newsletter from Historic Forks of the Wabash; River Currents from Banks of the Wabash; and Riffles & Pools from Hoosier Riverwatch.

Susan also reported having received notice that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are having their annual conference January 4-7, 2004.

Other New Business

Susan Benner reported being contacted by Storrow Kinsella regarding providing a speaker at the next WRHCC meeting. After some discussion, it was decided to limit speakers to those that can speak to specific projects related to the Wabash River. It was suggested that an appropriate project might be canoe camps or canoe launches.

John Gettinger suggested the commission formally resolve to support the Wabash River water trail. Ron James made a motion to support the WRHCC water trail and John Gettinger seconded it. Motion passed.

Ken Brunswick spoke to the commission about a grant that the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is applying to IDEM for, and they would like the commission's support. The grant is a 205(j) watershed management grant. John Gettinger made a motion to have Susan write a letter of support. Keith Ruble seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Keith Ruble reported the newsletter committee suggested changing the meeting agenda by putting more of the agenda in the newsletter. They also suggested having the speakers at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end. Susan Benner will draft a new agenda format to discuss at the next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mercedes Brugh announced Little Turtle Waterway winning an award for Best New Parks from Project for Public Spaces. Their website is *pps.org*.

Ron James invited the commission to tour the 1827 Chief Richardville House on December 30th.

John Isaacs announced on November 23rd, he is having a farm sale and will be selling his farm equipment.

FINAL COMMENTS

Dan McCain thanked the commission for coming to the interpretive center.

Gary Doxtater, from American Consulting, reported he sent a letter to the commission offering to present information about preservation of historic bridges at a future commission meeting.

ADJOURN

John Gettinger made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Ken Einselen seconded the motion.

Next Meeting-January 14, 2004-Tentative location, Indiana Government Center, Indianapolis.